



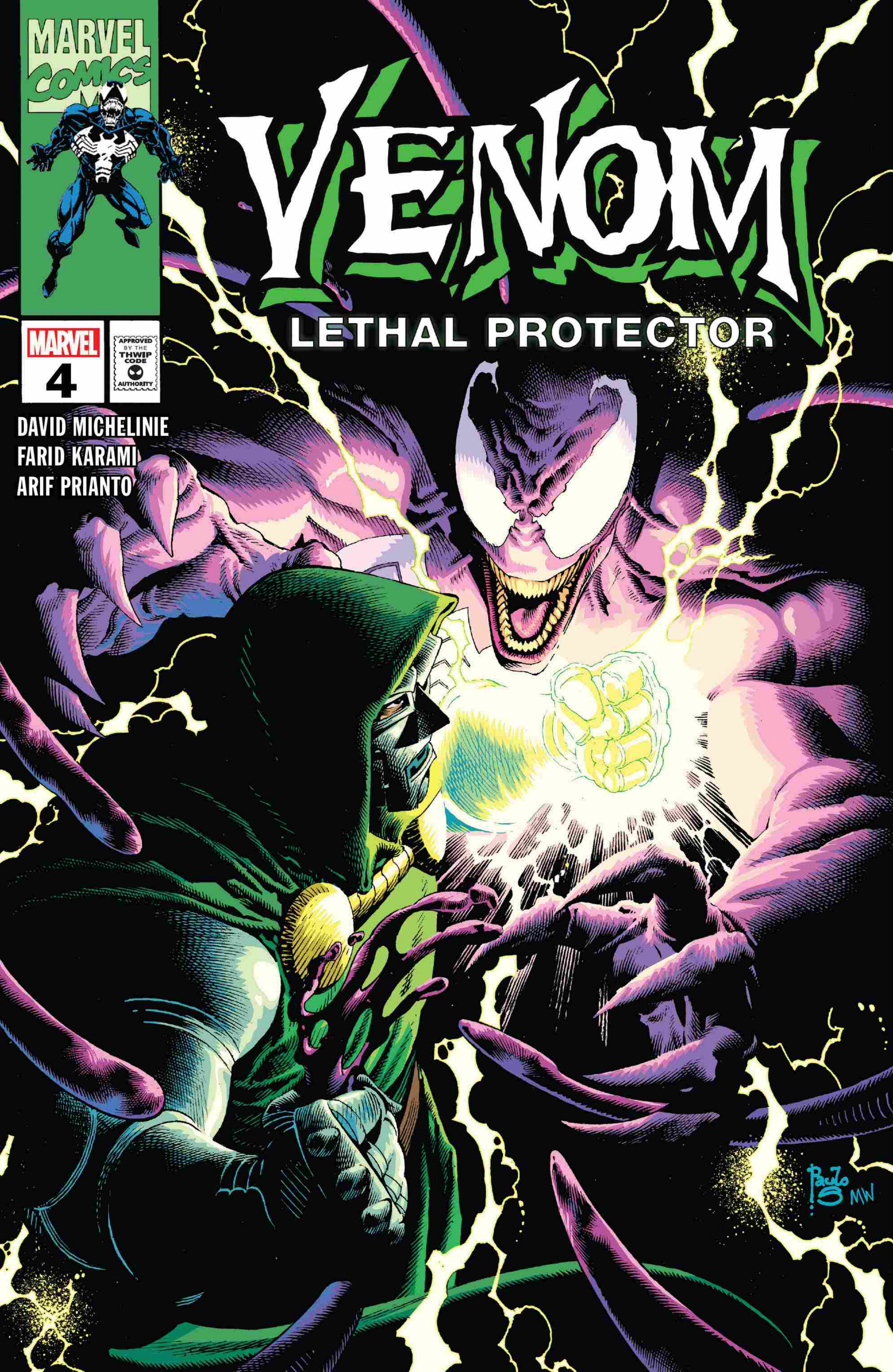
VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR

MARVEL
4

APPROVED
BY THE
FIM
CODE
AUTHORITY

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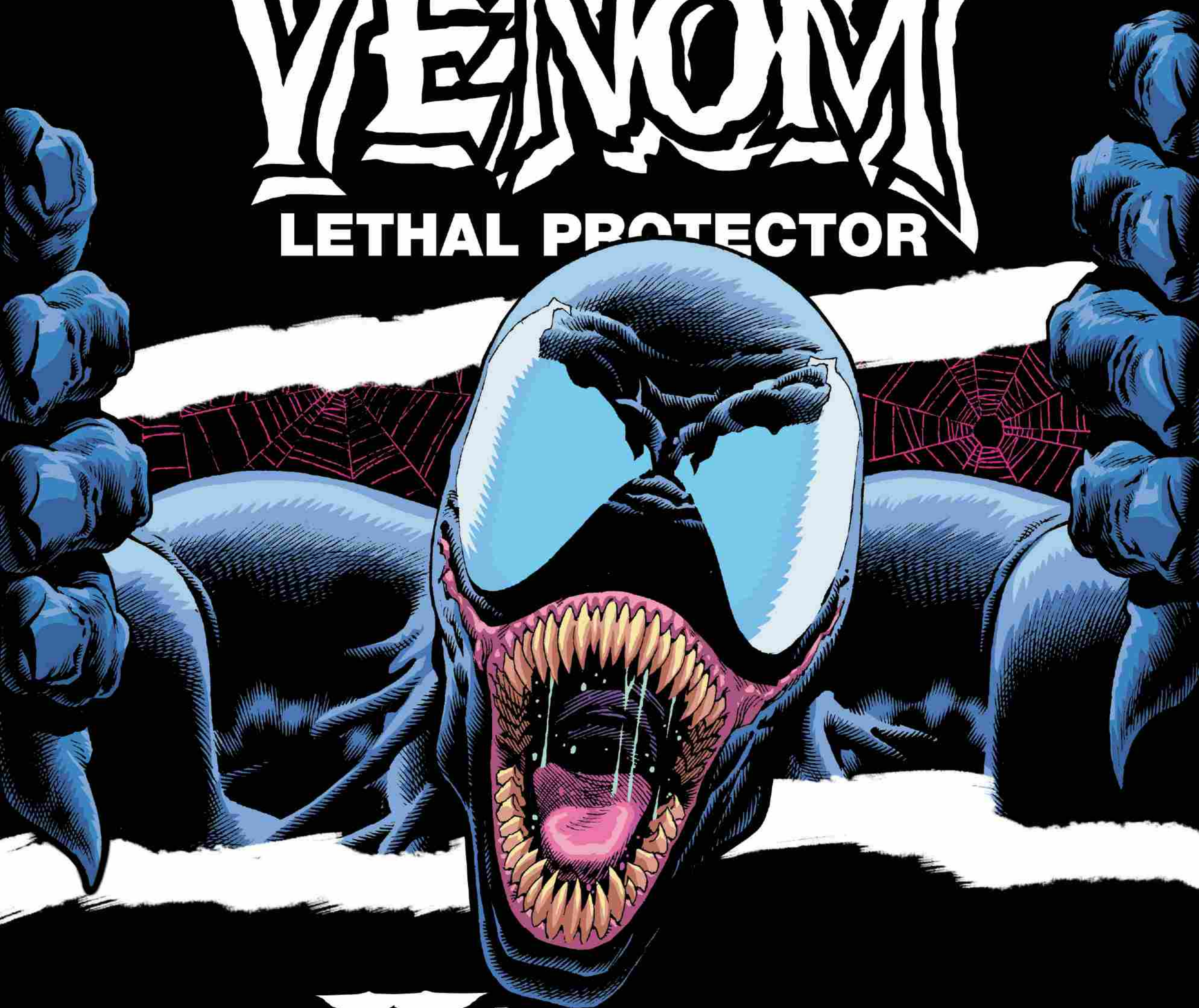


Paulo
MW

EDDIE BROCK WAS ONCE A RESPECTED JOURNALIST. BUT HIS CAREER WAS DESTROYED WHEN ONE OF HIS SOURCES WAS EXPOSED AS A FRAUD BY SPIDER-MAN. DISGRACED, BROCK WENT TO HIS NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH TO ASK FORGIVENESS BEFORE TAKING HIS OWN LIFE, UNAWARE THAT AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL PARASITE WAS IN THE PARISH'S BELL TOWER. SPURNED AND LEFT FOR DEAD BY THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, THE CREATURE CHOSE BROCK AS ITS HOST. IN THE PROCESS, IT IMBUED HIM WITH ALL OF SPIDER-MAN'S ABILITIES AND MORE: POWERS OF ADHESION, ORGANIC WEB-SHOOTERS ON THE BACK OF EACH HAND AND PREHENSILE TENDRILS WOVEN FROM THE CREATURE'S OWN BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL. ON A TWISTED CRUSADE AND OBSESSED WITH JUSTICE, THEY ARE:

VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR



II

PART 4 of 5

TOGETHER, EDDIE AND THE SYMBIOTE HAVE SWORN ETERNAL AND VIOLENT VENGEANCE AGAINST THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. THOUGH THEY HUNGER FOR PETER PARKER'S BRAINS, THEY HAVE ALSO BEGUN TO UNDERSTAND THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH THEIR INCREDIBLE POWER.

AFTER EDDIE ACCEPTED SILVER'S OFFER TO JOIN THE WILD PACK, VENOM AND SILVER SABLE ARE NOW ALLIES IN A BATTLE AGAINST THE HIGH-TECH TERRORIST ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS VANGUARD. HOWEVER, VANGUARD HAS NOT ONLY KIDNAPPED EDDIE'S OLD FRIEND PABLO MENDEZ, BUT ATTACKED A S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER AND PUT MILLIONS OF CIVILIANS IN DANGER BY SEIZING A POWERFUL AND DEADLY ALIEN ARTIFACT!

VENOM AND SABLE WERE ABLE TO SAVE PABLO AND TAKE DOWN VANGUARD, BUT DOCTOR DOOM HAS ACQUIRED THE LAST REMAINING SHARD OF THE ARTIFACT—AND HE'S MADE VENOM AN OFFER THEY CAN'T REFUSE!

HIGH IN THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS OF UPSTATE NEW YORK LAYS A CASTLE, THE STONE AND STEEL REDOUBT OF LATVERIAN LEADER, VICTOR VON DOOM.

FOR ITS MASTER, IT IS A PLACE OF PEACE AND PROTECTION, A REFUGE. FOR OTHERS...

...NOT SO MUCH!

BETRAYER!
YOU'LL PAY FOR
YOUR PERFDY IN
BLOOD AND
BONE!

By Darker Reason

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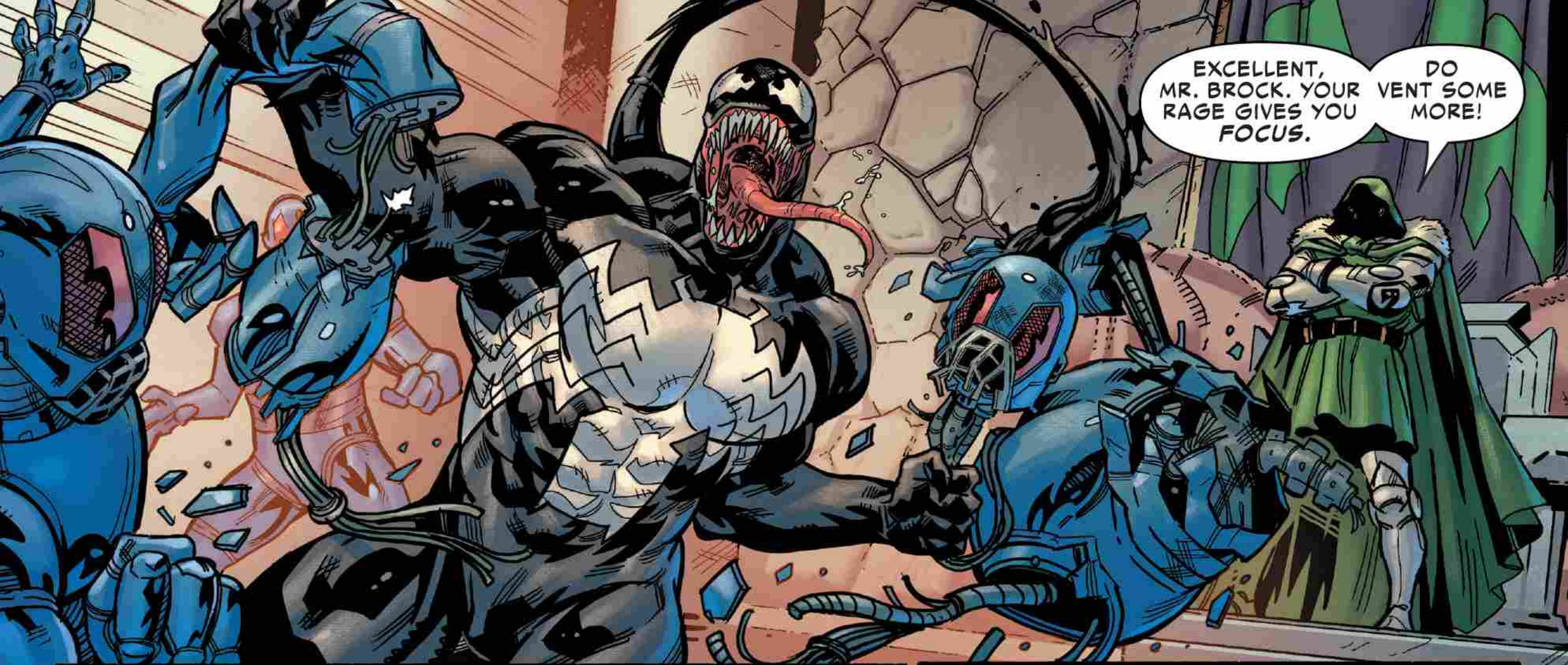
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EXCELLENT, MR. BROCK. YOUR RAGE GIVES YOU FOCUS.

DO VENT SOME MORE!



WHAT GIVES US ANGER WILL GIVE YOU A GRAVE, DOOM!

WE TRUSTED YOU, AND THIS IS OUR REWARD?

FWIP



YOU WILL UNDERSTAND... IN TIME.

WHAT WE UNDERSTAND IS THAT YOU ARE NO BETTER THAN THE LIARS AND THIEVES WE DEAL WITH EVERY DAY!



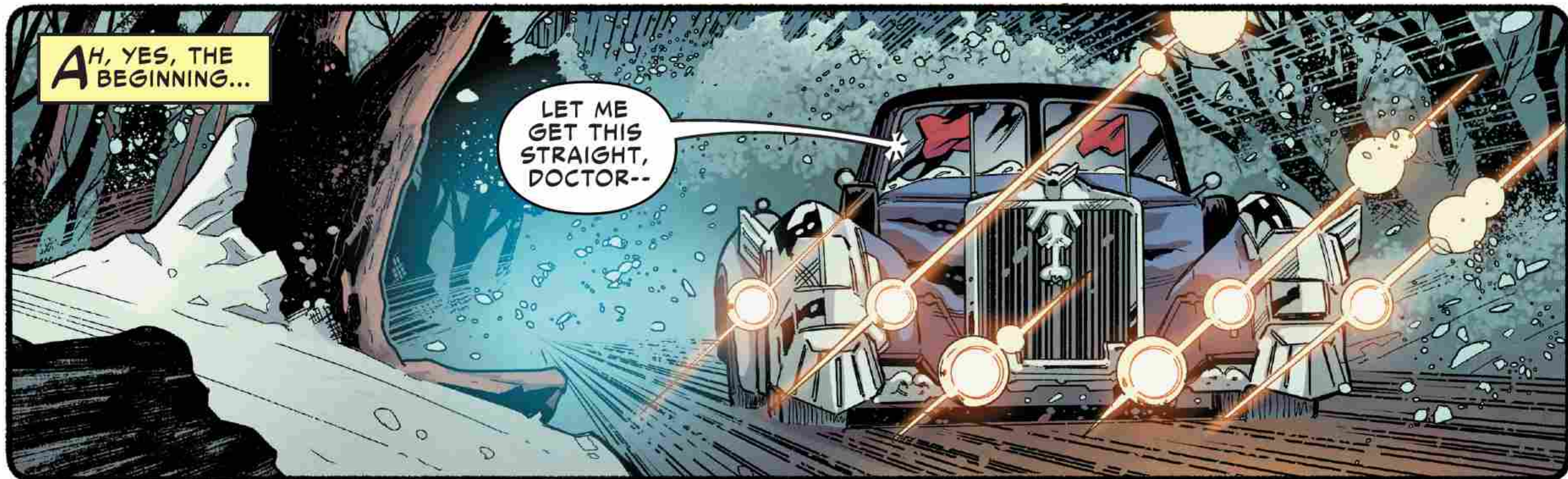
YOU'D BE WISE TO TEMPER YOUR LANGUAGE, MONSTER! IN LATVERIA, I AM ROYALTY!

ALL THE BETTER! A FEAST OF--



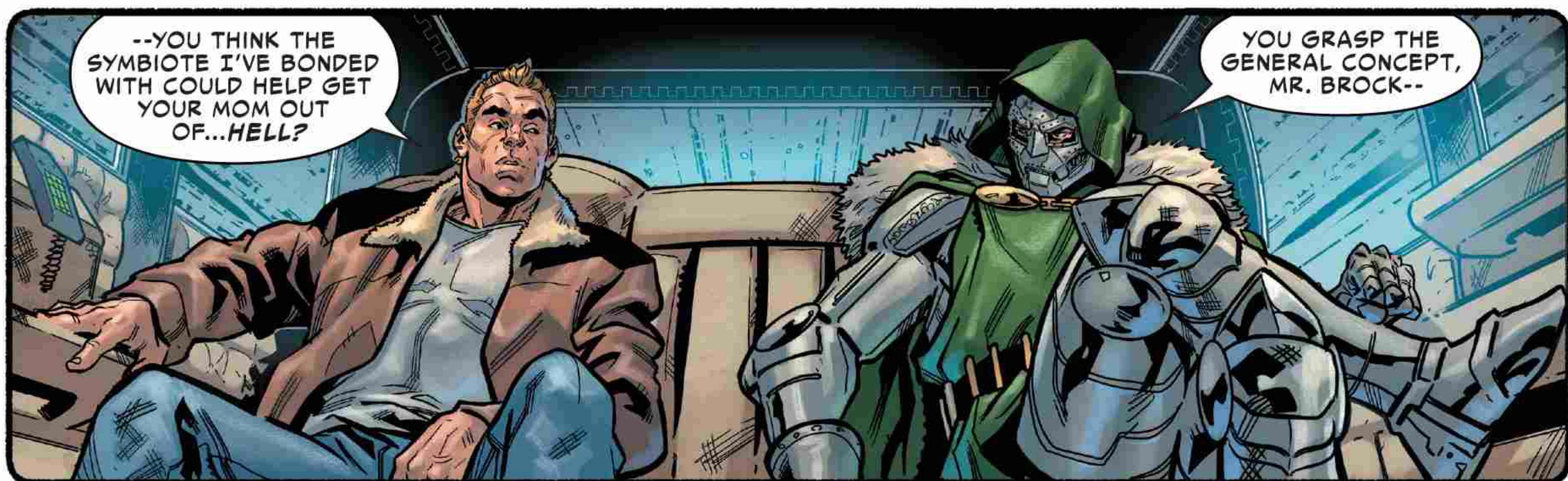
--BLUE BLOOD!

THE CONFLICT RE-ENGAGES, NO END IN SIGHT. BUT AS FOR ITS BEGINNING?



AH, YES, THE
BEGINNING...

LET ME
GET THIS
STRAIGHT,
DOCTOR--



--YOU THINK THE
SYMBIOTE I'VE BONDED
WITH COULD HELP GET
YOUR MOM OUT
OF...HELL?

YOU GRASP THE
GENERAL CONCEPT,
MR. BROCK--



--BUT REFER
TO MY MOTHER AS
"MOM" ONCE MORE,
AND THE PRICE YOU
PAY WILL BE GREATER
THAN EVEN YOUR
ALIEN "OTHER"
CAN SURVIVE!



WHOA, EASY
THERE! I'M HAVING
ENOUGH TROUBLE
DEALING WITH THE
IDEA THAT HELL
IS REAL!

HOW
'BOUT DROPPING
A FEW MORE
DETAILS...?



~~SIGH~~
VERY
WELL.

FOR TIME
UNTOLD, MY
REVERED MOTHER
WAS KNOWN
THROUGHOUT
EUROPE--

"--AS A **SORCERESS** OF UNPARALLELED ABILITY.

"BUT SUCH ACCLAIM RESULTED IN A RARE, IF JUSTIFIABLE, ACT OF VANITY--SHE DIED **UNCONFESSSED**.

"AND THUS WAS CONDEMNED TO AN ETERNITY OF **DAMNATION!**

"EVERY YEAR SINCE, ON MIDSUMMER'S EVE, I'VE JOURNEYED TO HELL TO BATTLE **DEMONS** FOR HER RELEASE. AND EVERY YEAR...

"...I HAVE **FAILED.**"

BUT WHILE MY RESOLVE REMAINS UNDIMINISHED, **REALITY** BURDENS ME WITH A SINGLE IRREFUTABLE FACT: I AM HUMAN AND, AS SUCH, WILL ONE DAY **DIE**.

AND WHO WILL CHAMPION MY MOTHER'S CAUSE THEN?

SO I BEGAN SEARCHING OTHER AVENUES. AND EVENTUALLY, AN UNFORESEEN **POSSIBILITY** AROSE.

WHAT... **US?!**

"SECRET FILES REMAIN SECRET ONLY TO THOSE WHO HAVEN'T THE MEANS TO **OBTAIN** THEM.

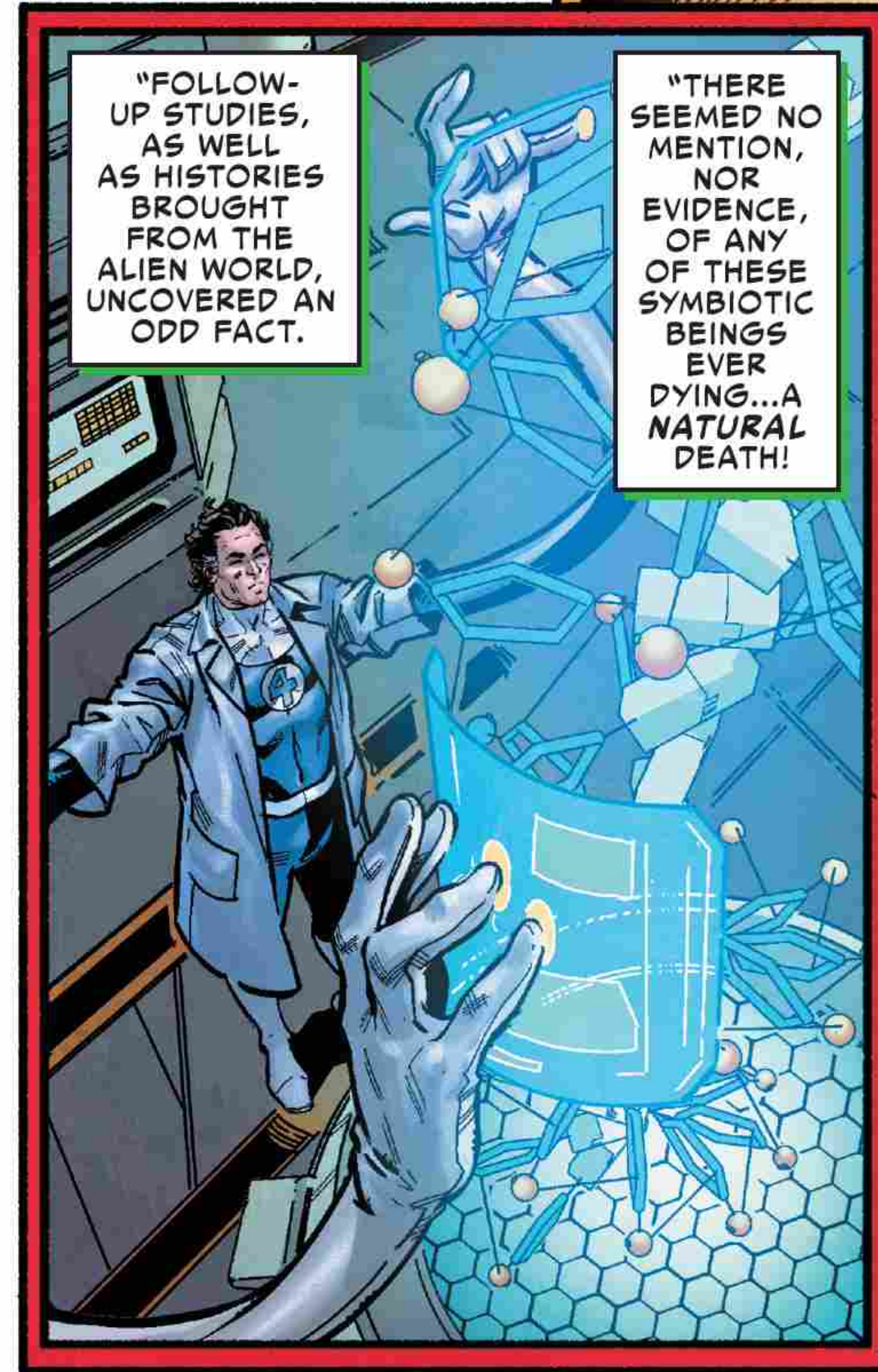
"AND I SOON BECAME AWARE OF CERTAIN, SHALL WE SAY, **ANOMALIES?**



"SOME TIME AGO, A GROUP OF HEROES FROM EARTH FOUGHT A WAR ON ANOTHER PLANET.

"WHEN THEY RETURNED, THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE... AND A UNIQUE *DENIZEN* OF THAT WORLD.*

*MARVEL SECRET WARS #1-12.

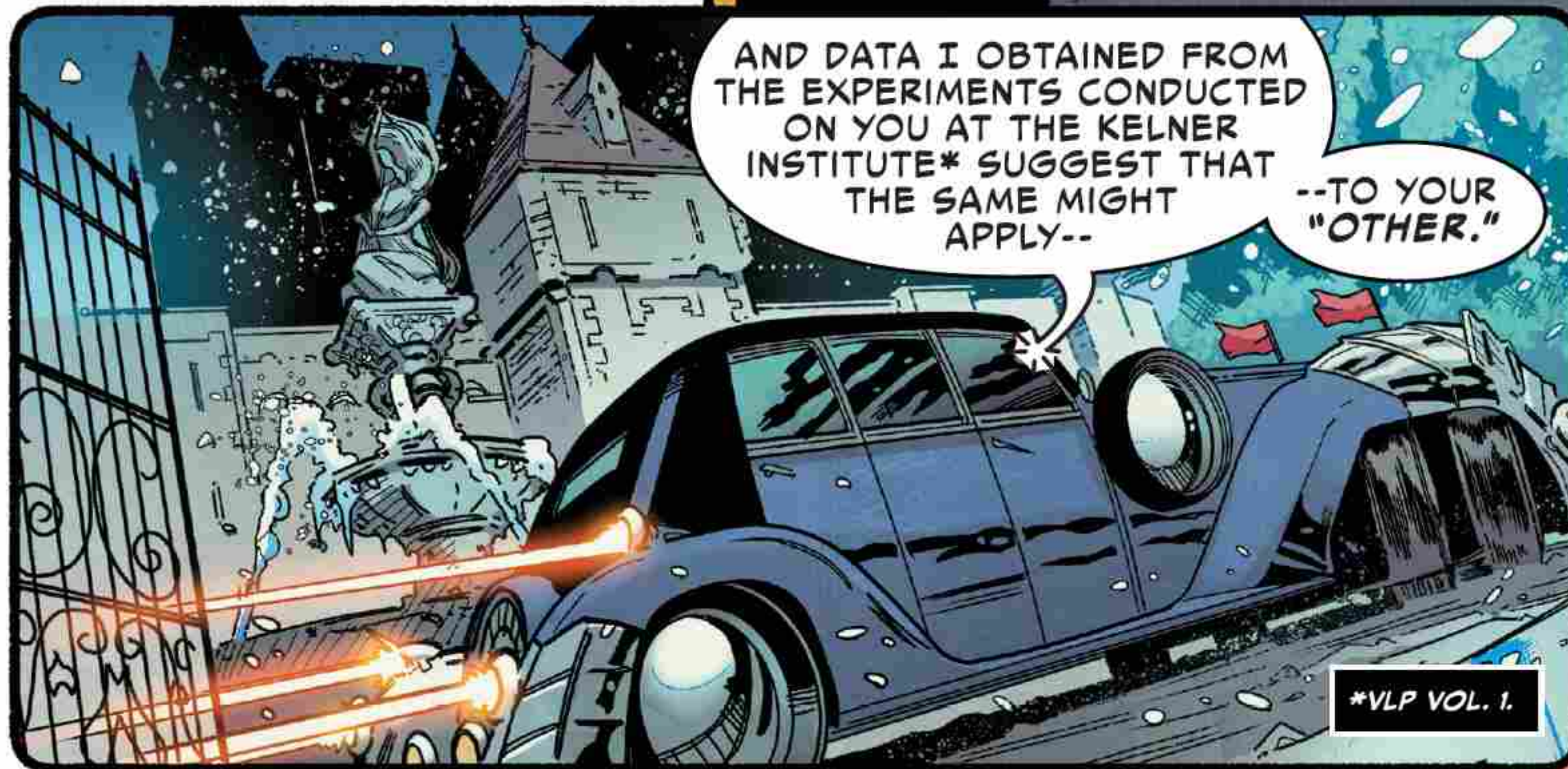


"FOLLOW-UP STUDIES, AS WELL AS HISTORIES BROUGHT FROM THE ALIEN WORLD, UNCOVERED AN ODD FACT.

"THERE SEEMED NO MENTION, NOR EVIDENCE, OF ANY OF THESE SYMBIOTIC BEINGS EVER DYING...A NATURAL DEATH!



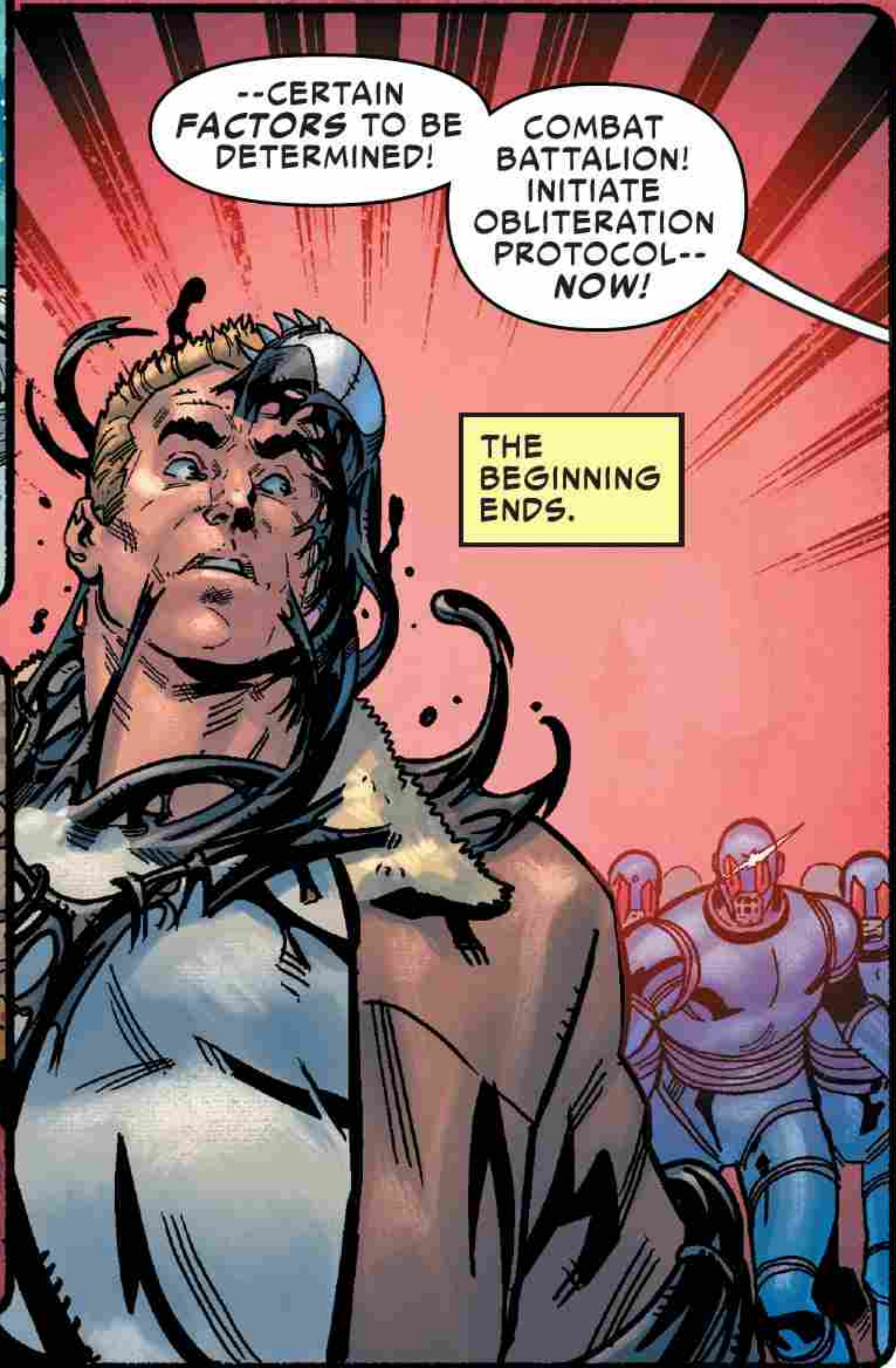
"IN BATTLE, YES, AND MURDER, CERTAINLY. BUT WITHOUT OUTSIDE INFLUENCE, IT SEEMED POSSIBLE THAT THIS RACE MIGHT BE...*IMMORTAL!*"



AND DATA I OBTAINED FROM THE EXPERIMENTS CONDUCTED ON YOU AT THE KELNER INSTITUTE* SUGGEST THAT THE SAME MIGHT APPLY--

--TO YOUR "OTHER."

*VLP VOL. 1.



--CERTAIN FACTORS TO BE DETERMINED!

COMBAT BATTALION! INITIATE OBLITERATION PROTOCOL--NOW!

THE BEGINNING ENDS.



YOU MEAN, TOGETHER... WE COULD BE IMMORTAL?

PERHAPS. BUT THERE STILL REMAIN--



AND NOW...

YOUR
ROBOT LACKEYS
BREAK LIKE BADLY
MADE TOYS!



SHALL WE
SEE IF YOUR MUCH-
VAUNTED ARMOR
CAN FAIR
BETTER?



WHA--?

K-LANK

RELAX,
BROCK. THE
PROCEDURE IS
COMPLETE.

KLATTLE

PL-KENK



"PROCEDURE"?

MORE DETAIL
ON INTERACTION
BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR
SYMBIOTE WAS
REQUIRED.

SCANNERS
EMBEDDED IN THESE
WALLS HAVE
GATHERED IT.



THE DANGER
ELEMENT WAS
ADDED TO
DETERMINE THE
STRENGTH OF
NONPHYSICAL
COMMUNICATION.

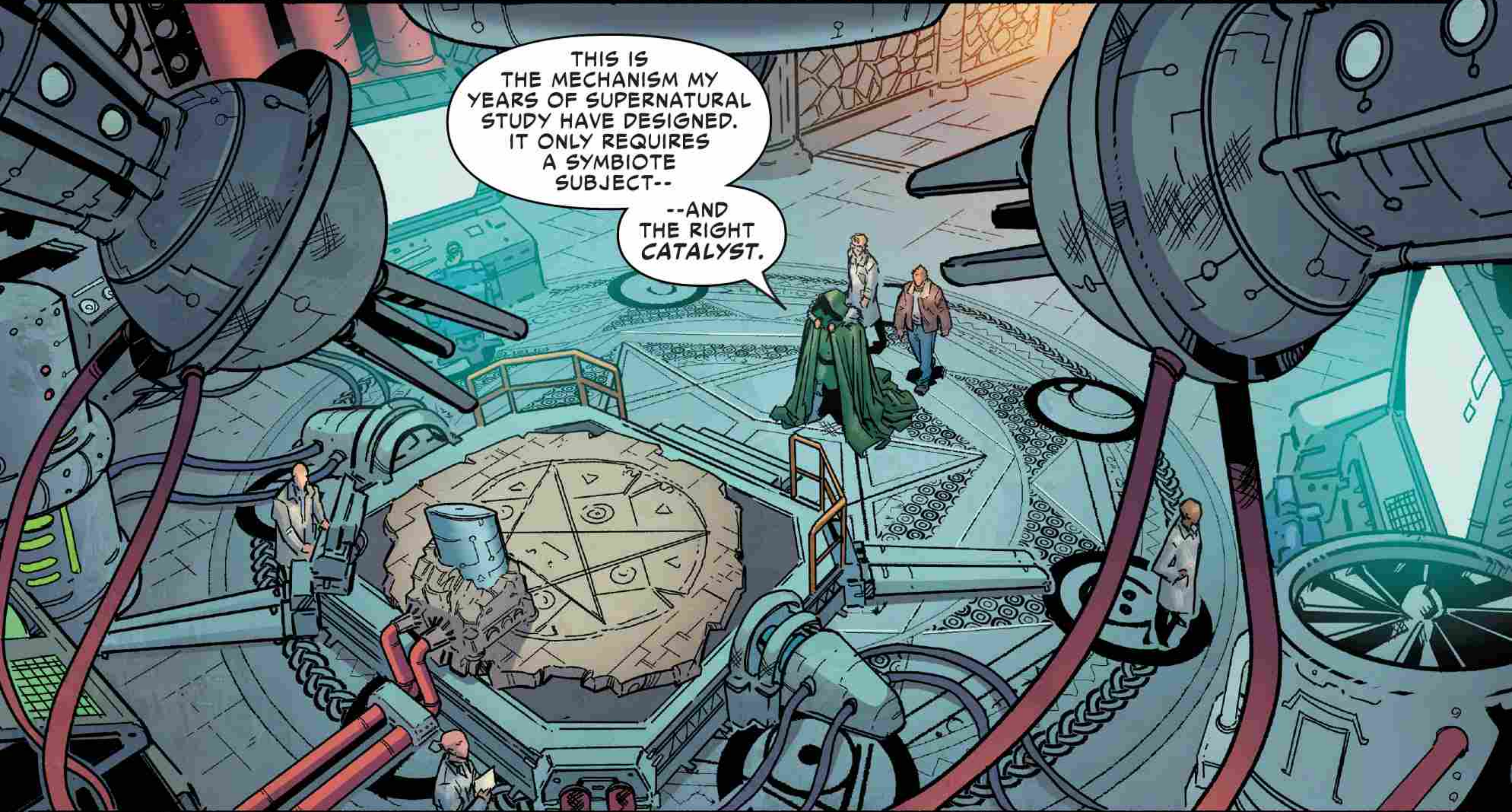
TEST
OR NO
TEST--





I AGREE.
WE FOLLOW.

FOR
NOW.



THIS IS
THE MECHANISM MY
YEARS OF SUPERNATURAL
STUDY HAVE DESIGNED.
IT ONLY REQUIRES
A SYMBIOTE
SUBJECT--

--AND
THE RIGHT
CATALYST.



THE LATTER WAS RECENTLY PROVIDED
BY DENNIS CHAN, AN OPERATIVE I HAD
EMBEDDED IN AN ORGANIZATION I
BELIEVE YOU KNOW WELL:

THE
VANGUARDIANS.



YOU
AND SABLE
DID A REAL JOB
DESTROYING OUR
HQ, BROCK.* I
WAS LUCKY TO
ESCAPE.

BUT I
DIDN'T DO
IT EMPTY-
HANDED!

*LAST
ISSUE.



OF COURSE,
THIS CHIP THAT
SURVIVED WHEN THE
ALIEN ARTIFACT WAS
SHATTERED ISN'T AS
POWERFUL AS THE
ORIGINAL.



NO, BUT PRELIMINARY EVALUATION INDICATES THAT IT HAS OTHER QUALITIES THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL.

NOW, MR. BROCK, IF YOU'LL STEP ONTO THE CONVERGENCE PLATFORM...?



WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU? YOU'VE DECEIVED US ONCE.

DOOM'S WORD IS ENOUGH. BUT...I ALSO NEED YOU.

AND WHILE THAT NEED REMAINS, YOU'RE AS SAFE AS A KITTEN IN A CHILD'S ARMS.

SLOWLY, MOST RELUCTANTLY, EDDIE BROCK ASCENDS THE PLATFORM.

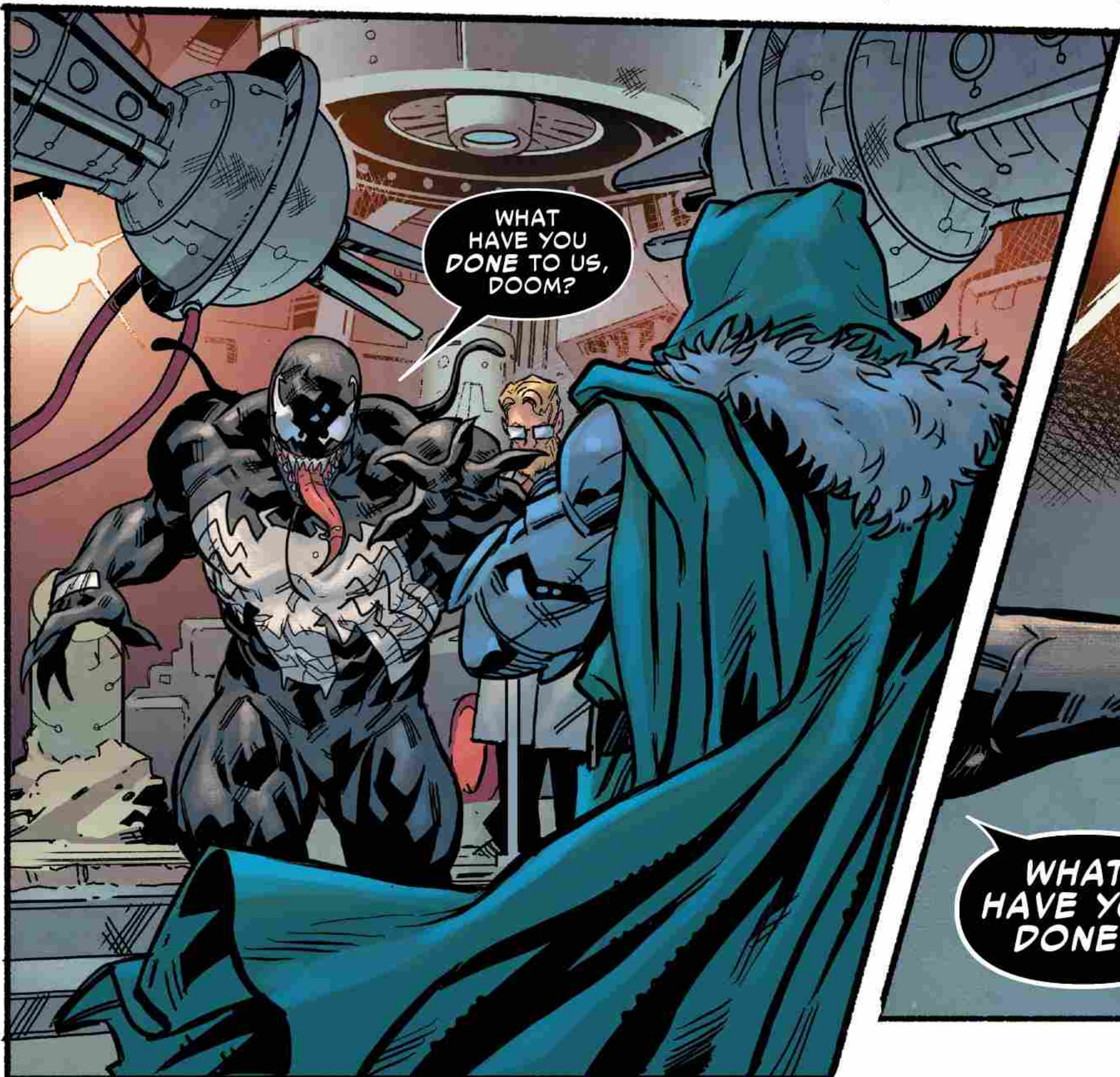
DATA FLOWS THROUGH WAITING CIRCUITS.

A SWITCH IS THROWN.



AND...

SSZZZZZZRRRAKSKISH



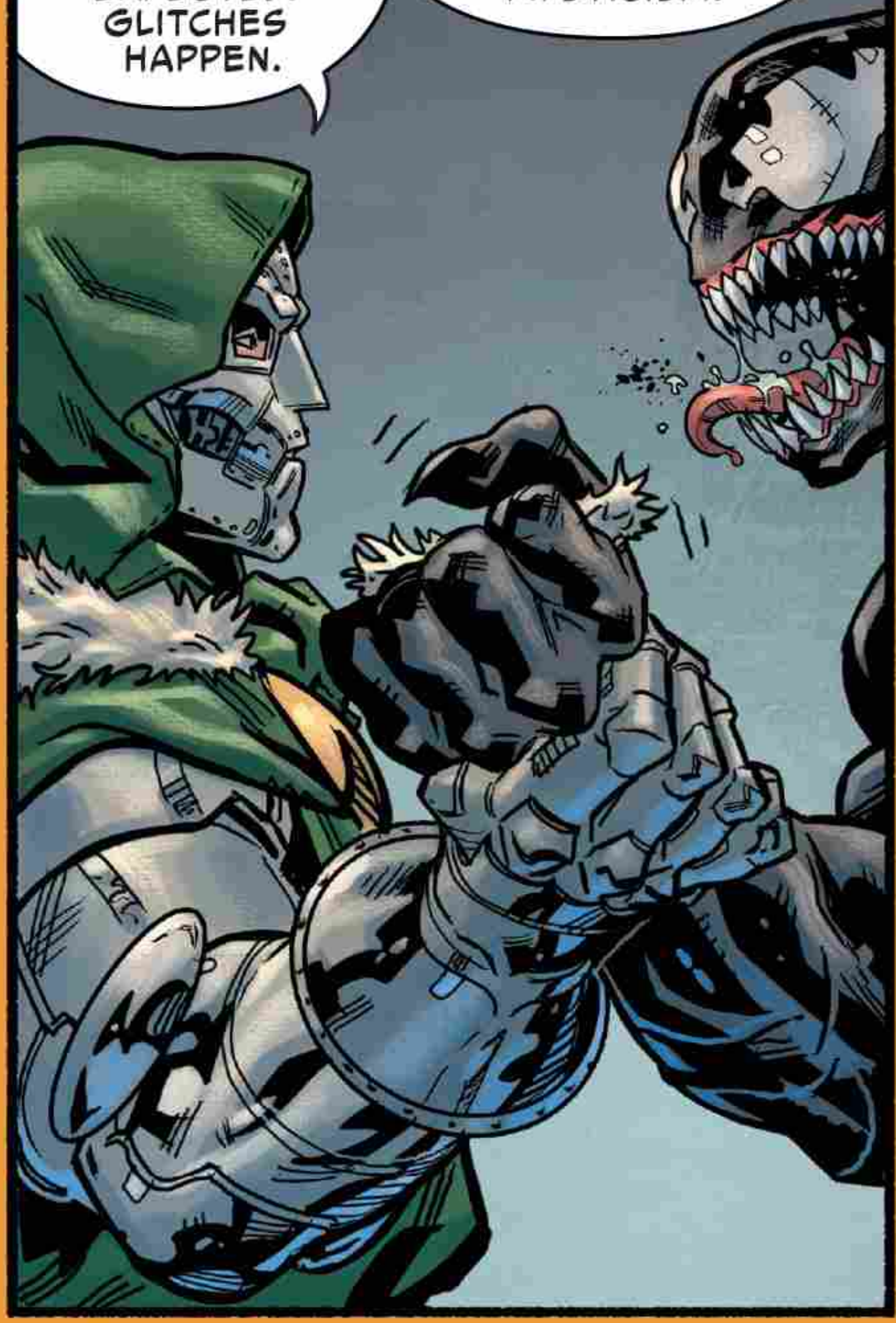


YOU HAVE STRONG HANDS, MR. BROCK.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KEEP THEM?

OVERREACTING SOLVES NOTHING. MINOR SETBACKS ARE TO BE EXPECTED. GLITCHES HAPPEN.

THE ARTIFACT CHIP IS SCIENCE, WHILE MY LONGEVITY DEVICE HAS ROOTS IN MYSTICISM.



PERHAPS THE REVERSAL OF YOUR SYMBIOTE'S CURRENT CONDITION LAYS IN BOTH. TELL ME, HAVE YOU HEARD OF--

--THE DARKHOLD?



IT IS A BOOK OF SPELLS, BLACKER THAN A MOONLESS NIGHT. SOME SAY THAT EVIL ESSENCE HAS INFUSED THE TOME ITSELF--

--SOAKING INTO THE VERY SKIN THAT BINDS IT.



A BOOK... BOUND IN HUMAN SKIN?

DID I SAY "HUMAN"? NO MATTER.

I'VE RECENTLY LEARNED THAT A SCRAP OF THAT BINDING, TORN FREE IN A CONFLICT CENTURIES AGO, HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM A SOURCE IN CROATIA.



I'VE RECENTLY LEARNED THAT IT IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING EXAMINATION IN A GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION NOT FAR FROM HERE.

A WELL-GUARDED INSTALLATION.



WHICH IS WHERE YOU AND YOUR "OTHER" COME IN.

THE REST OF THE NIGHT IS SPENT IN CONJECTURE-- THE NEXT DAY IN EXPERIMENTATION.



WHILE ELSEWHERE THROUGH THAT TIME, AT MANHATTAN'S BLESSING HOSPITAL...

LIKE ALL UPPER-ECHELON EMPLOYEES--

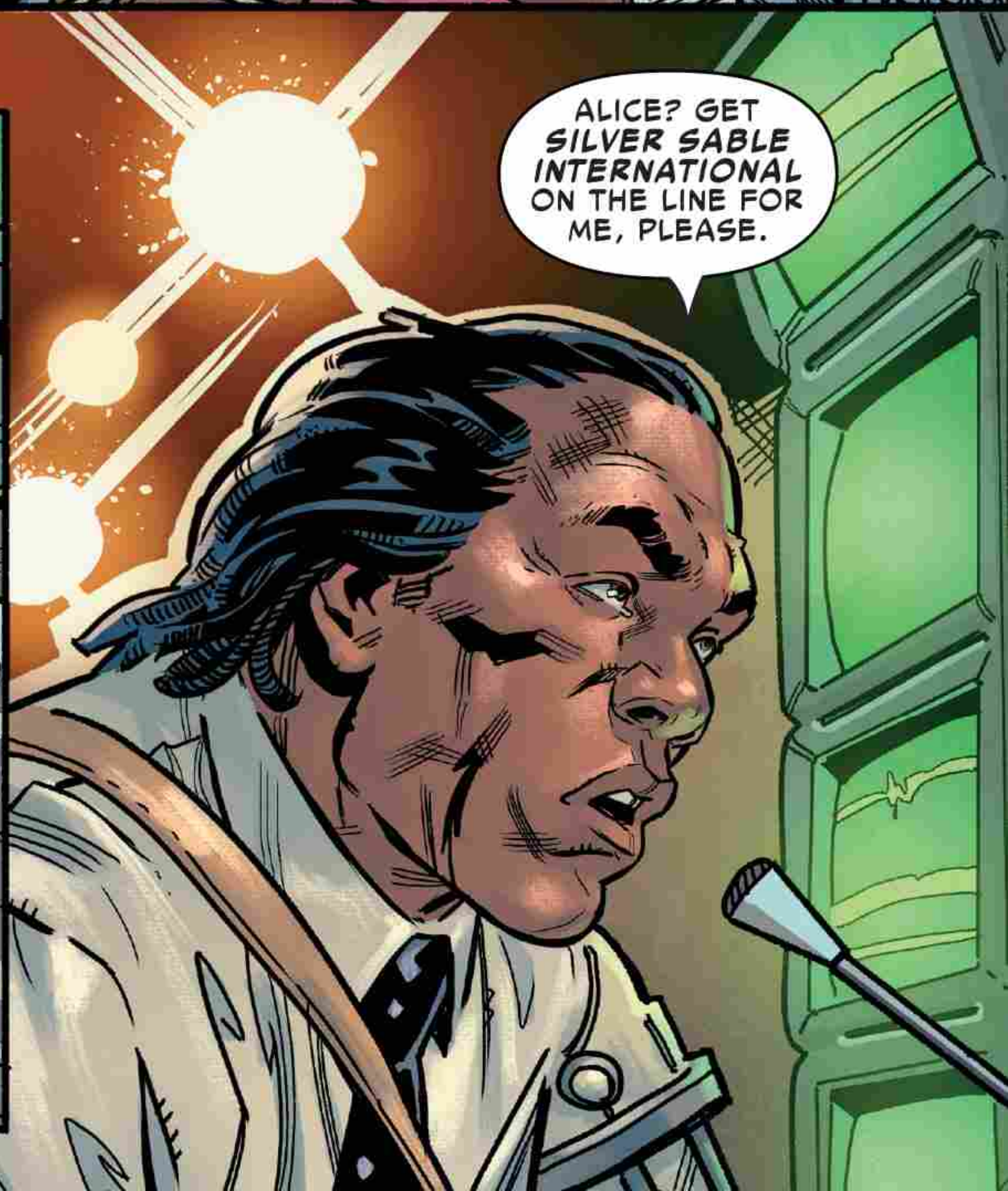


--DR. GODDERT HAS A TRACKING IMPLANT IN CASE OF ABDUCTION.

BUT WITH A BROKEN ARM, I CAN'T VERY WELL MOUNT A RESCUE MISSION AS **CARDIAC!**



I GUESS SOMETIMES, EVEN THOSE WHO HELP NEED TO ASK FOR HELP!



ALICE? GET **SILVER SABLE INTERNATIONAL** ON THE LINE FOR ME, PLEASE.



AND, DAYS OF PREPARATION
LATER...

STRANGE,
HOW I'M STILL
TALKING TO YOU,
EXPECTING A REPLY.
"OLD HABITS," I
SUPPOSE.



OR MAYBE,
LIKE A COMA
PATIENT, YOU CAN
STILL HEAR. MAYBE,
DOOM'S THEORY
IS RIGHT...



EXCUSE ME, MR.
BROCK, THE MAS--I
MEAN, DOCTOR DOOM--
HAS TASKED ME
WITH SHOWING YOU
TO THE MOTOR
POOL.



YOU'RE A PH.D,
GODDARD, BUT
YOU LET DOOM
TREAT YOU LIKE
AN ERRAND
BOY?



TO OUR
"HOST,"
EVERYONE
IS AN
ERRAND
BOY!

YEAH, I GET
THAT. STILL, HAVE
THERE BEEN ANY NEW
THEORIES ON WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO MY
"OTHER"?



I'M A
SCIENTIST,
MR. BROCK,
BUT I DON'T
DISCOUNT
RELIGION.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED
THAT DOOM MAY HAVE
TAKEN YOUR SYMBIOTE'S...
SOUL?

SOUL?
IT NEVER
OCCURRED
TO ME...



...THAT
IT MIGHT
EVEN HAVE
ONE!



TWO HOURS AND AN UNCOMFORTABLE HUMVEE RIDE LATER...

WOULDN'T THIS BE A LOT LESS COMPLICATED--



--IF YOU SIMPLY BLASTED YOUR WAY IN AND TOOK WHAT YOU WANT?

I MAY HAVE DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY AS LEADER OF A SOVEREIGN NATION--

--BUT VIOLENTLY BREACHING A GOVERNMENT COMPOUND COULD STRETCH THAT PRIVILEGE TO THE BREAKING POINT.



YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND...

RIGHT. OKAY, LET'S JUST GET THIS OVER WITH.



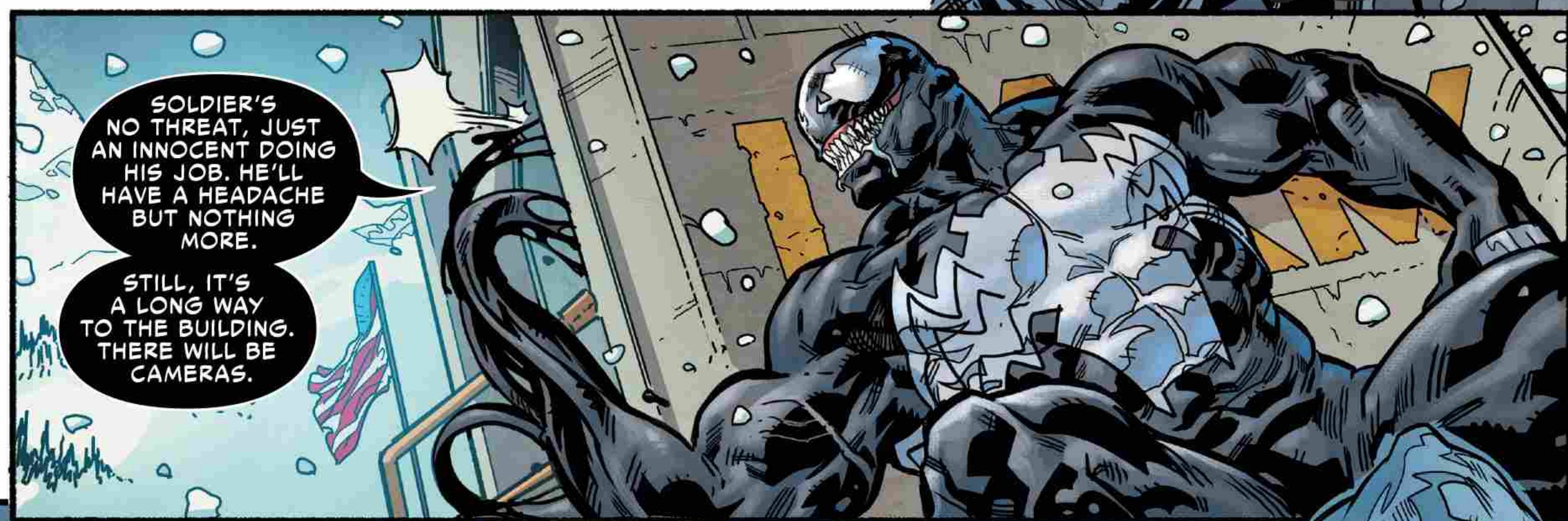
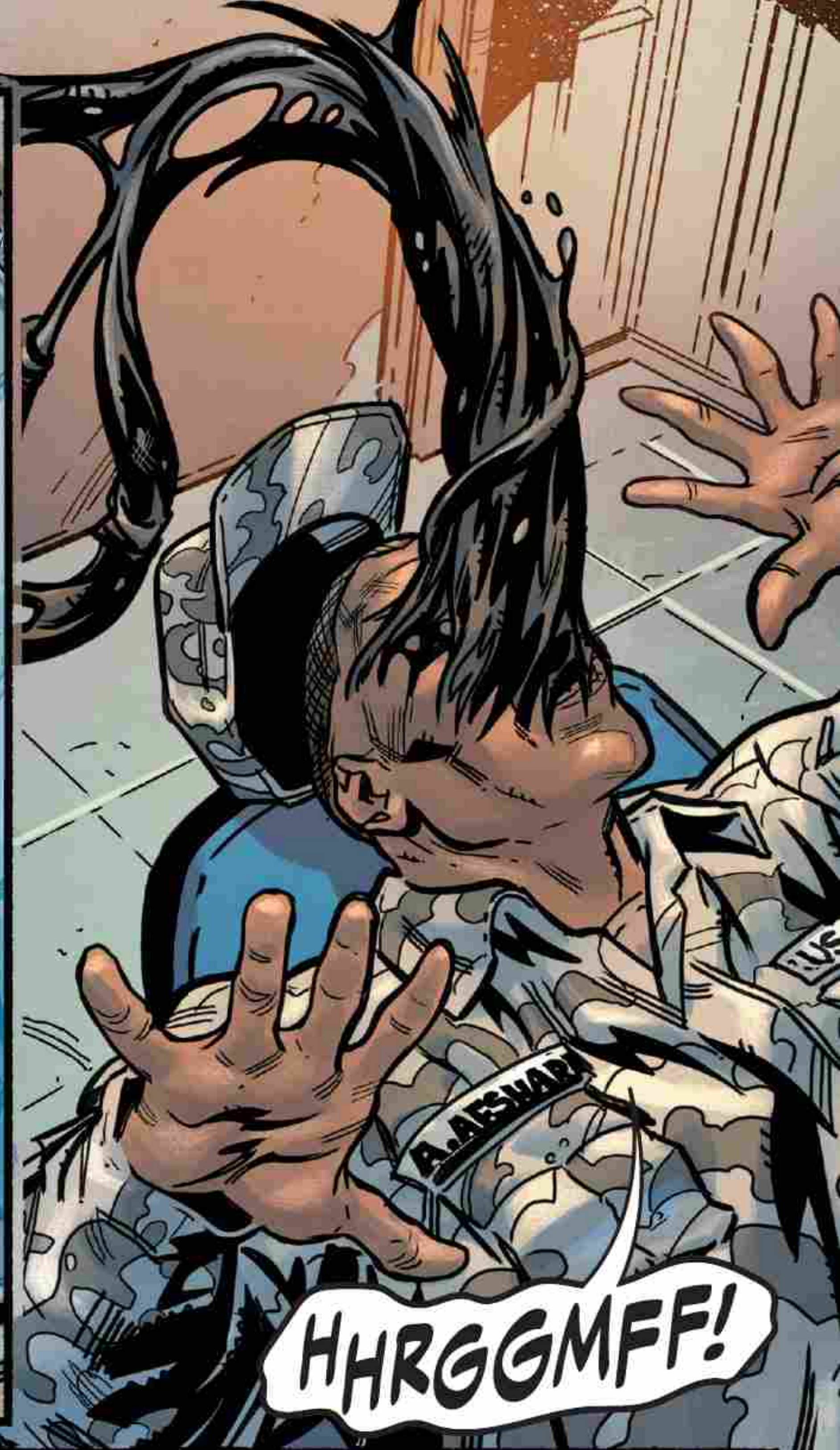
ONE LAST CAUTION: DO NOT TOUCH THE DARKHOLD SCRAP ITSELF.

THE RESULT COULD BE... UNPLEASANT.



SWELL. MAGIC...SPELLS... DEMONS?

LIVING FOREVER IS STARTING TO SOUND A LOT LESS ATTRACTIVE!







KILL NOW--
FIGURE OUT
LATER!



STOP
NOW--OR DIE
LATER!



LAB RAT
PUTTING THAT
JAR IN A
SAFE!

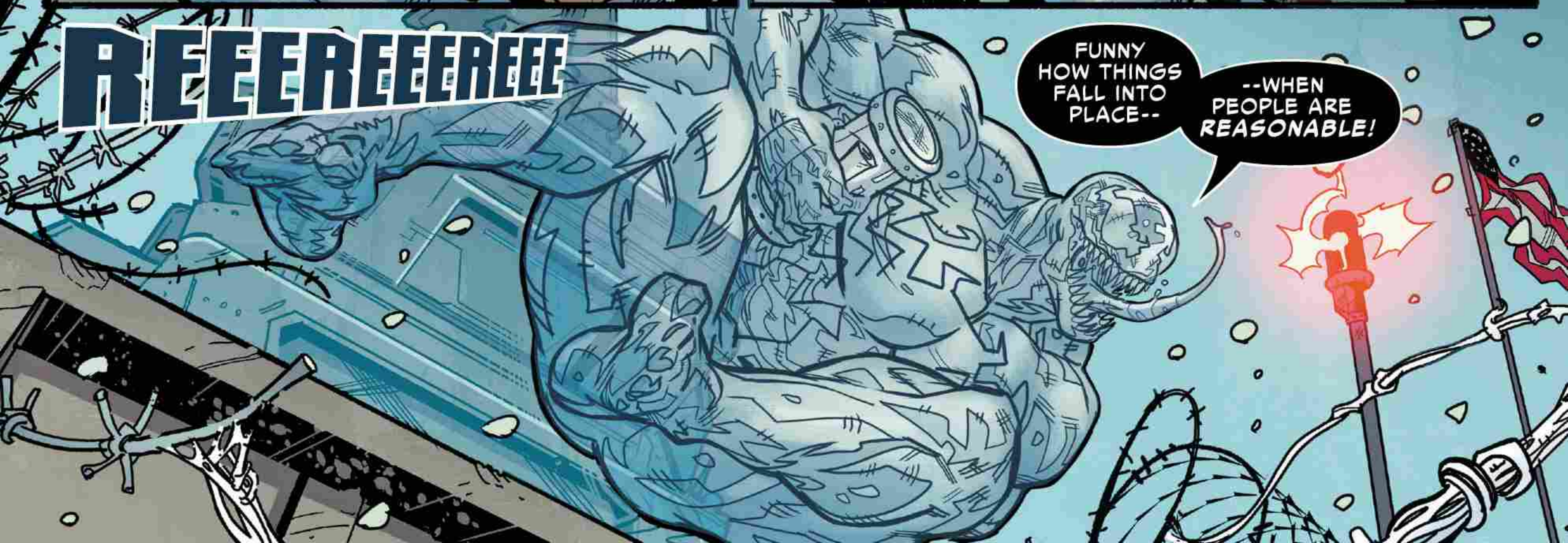
MUST
BE THE DARKHOLD
SHRED!



DON'T!



UNLESS
YOU PREFER TO
SEE YOUR BRAIN
IN A SIMILAR
CONTAINER!



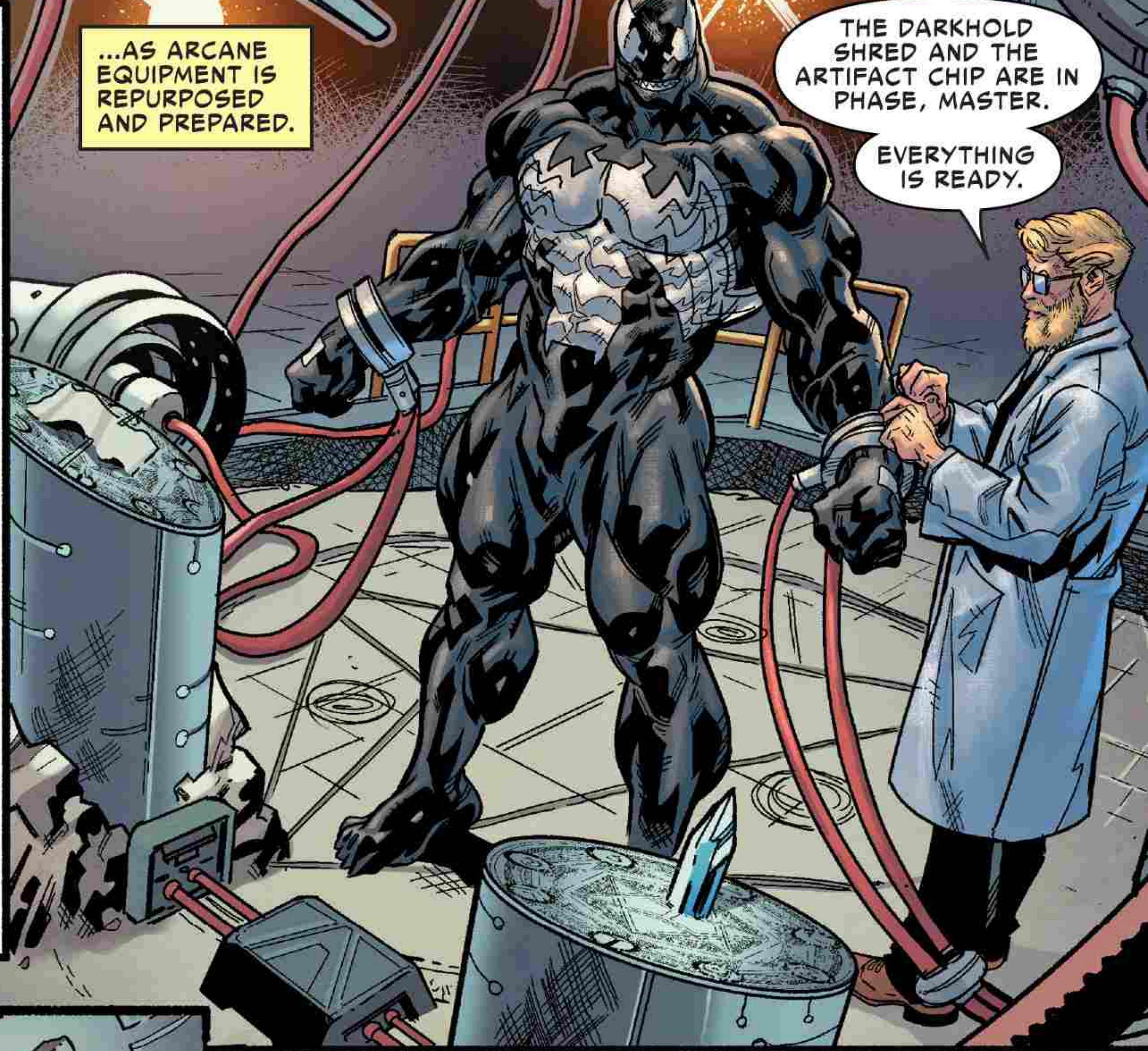
FUNNY
HOW THINGS
FALL INTO
PLACE--

--WHEN
PEOPLE ARE
REASONABLE!



THE RETURN TO DOOM'S KEEP IS MADE WITHOUT INCIDENT.

LAST MINUTE DIAGNOSES ARE MADE, CALCULATIONS CHECKED AND RECHECKED...



...AS ARCAINE EQUIPMENT IS REPURPOSED AND PREPARED.

THE DARKHOLD SHRED AND THE ARTIFACT CHIP ARE IN PHASE, MASTER.

EVERYTHING IS READY.



REMEMBER, DOOM, YOU'RE TO RESTORE MY OTHER TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE. ANYTHING ELSE WILL BRING... CONSEQUENCES.

YOU THREATEN VICTOR VON DOOM? HOW UTTERLY--

--AMUSING!



ACTIVATE!

CIRCUITS CONNECT.



INCONGRUOUS FACTORS MIX: FUTURE AND PAST, UNHOLY AND UNEARTHLY, THE SUBLIME AND THE BARBAROUS.

THE RESULT?



PAIN!

AAAAGHH!

MR.
BROCK?

MR. BROCK,
CAN YOU
HEAR ME?

WH...WHO...?
D-DR. GODDARD?

WHAT
HAP--?

BARs?
A-AND MY
OTHER--
GONE?

DOOM! YOU
SWORE YOU
WERE GOING TO
HEAL US!

I
CHANGED
MY MIND.

OR RATHER,
TO BE MORE
ACCURATE--

--WE...

...CHANGED
OURS!

To Be
Continued!



Next

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C.B. CEBULSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

THE WICKED WEB-SLINGER WANTS YOUR **BRAINS**--WE MEAN, YOUR **LETTERS**!
SEND YOUR NOTES TO SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM. BE SURE TO MARK THEM "OKAY TO PRINT"!

#5





ZONE